

Castle Utgard: The Legend of Hogi and Lugi

by Grim Revolution

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Summary: Running away was never the Viking wayâ€¦ but who ever said Hiccup was a normal Viking? Pray to Odinâ€¦ the boy's gone mad.

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><p>Prologue<p>

I'm here to tell you a story.

It's not a good against evil story, no, this is a story about beauty, about life, and about death. This is a story about a father and a son, about a boy and his friend, about the ocean and the sky.

Long before humans first set eyes upon the great northern waters, a creature lived there. It was an egg and so, it was small, but a sycamore comes from a seed, an oak from an acorn. Sometimes the very big comes from the very small.

But that's perhaps the prelude of the prologue because before there was something there had to have been something else. Everything is connected; the dark gave way to light, the light gave way to the stars, the stars gave birth to planets, and so on.

This story, however, starts with life. This story starts when stone meets iron.

This story starts with the colour green and the colour black.

When Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III was born the full moon darkened bit by bit until it was black. The stars shone, the fires flickered

in an evening breeze, and the Vikings stared up at the sky in horror as the white eye in the sky disappeared, swallowed up by the night serpent. The wind howled like the great wolves of the north, ripping its icy claws into wood and skin, finding a way past furs and fires.

Valka, wife of the Chief, her belly full and pregnant, went into labour when the last flame was blown out. Believing that Valhalla would welcome both his wife and child in the same night, Stoick brought his offering and a prayer to the gods.

The sheep's blood was thick and as black as the moon in the dark, ripples made across the surface by the wind as Stoick sent up word after word to those in Asgardâ€”begging that they would save his family's life.

The Goddess N  tt heard him first, her gentle fingers dragging across the night sky, cradling stars between her palms as if they were her own babes. "Let him die," one of the other Gods had said, but Baldr looked upon the face of N  tt and knew it would not be so.

He breathed life into the boy, joined only by V  r and Kvasir.

But Hiccup lived and his mother lived to the great joy of Stoick who thanked the Gods and held his family close. Baldr and N  tt watched them in the comfort of the night, but there was still work to be done.

Deep in the roots of Yggdrasil, beyond the eye of Odin and the sight of Freya, Thor and Hel created a beast of lightning and death. They gave it the speed of the sky and the whisper of darkness, the crash of storms and the kiss of destruction. It was a beast like no other, a creature that could become a king, a god.

But when the gods were sleeping, a shadow slipped through.

Hl  n whispered to the beast tales of fish and flying, of joy and a boy blessed by the night just as it was. Night after night she stayed with the creature and told it stories of joy and happiness, of a boy with jade eyes like its own and a heart made of fire.

Then, she fled to Freya and whispered the workings of the Gods to herâ€”but the beast was gone when they came back, escaping the roots where it had been bound to find the world the Goddess had promised.

When it awoke upon a rocky shore, the creature remembered nothing.

Nothing, except, for green.

* * *

><p>Chapter One<p>

Journey to Castle Utgard

The silence around the training arena was so still it was, in itself, a noise. Like the echo after a thunderclap. The ringing after that sudden, shaking, _boom_. Hundreds of eyes were focused upon a beast

and a boy. A dragon and a boy. Dark red scalesâ€”almost a dark orangeâ€”striped with black, four curling antlers (grouping off in two) jutting off a flattened skull...

And jagged teeth that looked like rows of nails ripped out of a fence post.

They (they as in the numerous Vikings surrounding the arena) called it the Monstrous Nightmare. Big, gold eyes watched with slit pupils, nostrils flared, smoke spun up from the gaps in its teeth. It's body took up most of the arena, tail whipping out against stone, spines along it's back flaring outward with each breath.

In front of it was a boyâ€”barely on the cusp of manhood (and not even that) with red hair that was like the dying embers of a fire. Freckles were peppered across his pale cheeks, highlighting the roundness of his face. "They're not who we think they are," Hiccup, son of Stoick, heir to the village, was saying, hand reached out to the still and curious creature in front of him.

The Monstrous Nightmare shuffled forward like a cat, arching its neck and back, the claws of its bat-like wings scraping against the stone. It's nostrils flared inches from the boy's fingers.

"We don't have to kill them."

A murmur rose through the crowd, quiet, stifled gasps that were quickly muffled as eyes turned towards the large, burly man sitting on a stone chair. His beard was great and red, eyes narrowed and fierce. A horned helmet sat upon his head, kept from moving by thick braids. He spurred into a rage, grabbing the war hammer at his side in one burly fist. "I said," his voice thundered through the arenaâ€”through the mountains, "STOP THE FIGHT!"

Stone hit iron, the crash vibrating through the nearest Vikings' bones. Hiccup felt it deep in his chest, his heart thudding, pausing, starting again like a wild bird caught in a cage. The serene moment was broken, Monstrous Nightmare suddenly in a frenzy as the sound sent its heart frantically beating. The moment was lost, the iron, the chains, the wooden gatesâ€”they all came back in a flash of gold and grey.

And the dragon snapped its large jaws, just missing Hiccup's left hand. The boy ran, scrambling, leather boots slipping against stone, his arms wind milling for balance as wet, sticky flame hit the wall behind where he had once stood.

Hiccup screamed, throat lined with panic and terror as the large creature scuttled after him, the dome of iron too small for the Monstrous Nightmare to take flight. But the neck was long enough for the dragon to come in from above, and the claws on the elbow of its wings and tips of its back feet were sharp enough to dig into stone so it climbed the walls like a gecko. Each snap was like the sound of scissors closing togetherâ€”with the added threat of maimed flesh and broken bones, however, it was more like the sound of two chainsaws clashing together.

"Out of my way," Pushing past the Vikings around him, Stoick stalked towards the gate, around the iron dome, his large form like a great bear, furs swinging with each step, his burly body moving in a

single, smooth motion. His voice was that of cold determinationâ€”a father disappointed, but not willing to let his son die by the cruel jut of a dragon's maw.

"Hiccup!" Astrid screamed, her hands clenching the wood of the gateâ€”she had been there since the beginning, since he had stepped into the arena. Her nails dug into wood, but she didn't feel it, frantically searching the walls with her eyes for something, anything to prop the door openâ€”there_.

An axe, strong, sturdy, made by the best blacksmith Berk had to offer. There was a symbol on the side, twists and curvesâ€”a sign that should have been known to her but had been lost for days upon days of training and sparring. She used it to prop the gate open and shoved her skinny, but powerful form underneath. The spikes of her skirt caught on stone, but she had eyes for just one person; the redhead currently dodging blasts of fire.

Hiccup didn't hear or see either of themâ€”all of his senses were focused (and rightfully so) on the dragon currently wanting him roasted alive. He half ran half crawled to the wooden platform of weapons and reached for the shield. Skin brushed against wood and it was only muscle memory that saved him from being trampled.

Or luck, really. It might've been both.

Either way, he was running, zigzagging, ducking under flame and wing, trying to find something to hold in front of himself besides the mangled, broken shield.

Stoick grabbed the iron gateâ€”the second one, the one leading _to_ the one leading into the arenaâ€”and wrenched it upwards, muscles hardly straining as chains groaned and screeched at him. He heard Astrid's scream for his son and arrived just in time to watch the blonde kick up one of the makeshift hammers with her foot, grip it by the handle, and fling it across the arena.

The Monstrous Nightmare screeched when it hit its nose, claws scratching against the ground as its chin slammed against stone. Yellow eyes blinked as if in a daze before sharpening, turning to the young woman. It went after her with a snarl, shooting across stone as if it was flying instead of being on the ground. White, curled teeth snapped at the heel of Astrid's boots, inches away as she fled, palms slapping against the wall and floor.

Flinging open the second gate, Stoick reached out of the opening. "This way!" He yelled to the teenagers, motioning with one great arm to the safety of the area beyond. Astrid didn't hesitate, turning in one smooth motionâ€”her heel siding across the groundâ€”to sprint towards him. Hiccup wasn't far behind, yelping as fire shot past where they had been, almost close enough to singe the hair on their heads.

Stoick caught Astrid as she flew across the small gap in the stone, holding her to the side and just a bit behind himself, reaching out for Hiccup.

Hiccup who was looking back, Hiccup who stumbled, Hiccup who cried out when fire arched over his head and oozed down stone and wood, the heat forcing him to change directions, to run away from his father

and Astrid. The Monstrous Nightmare latched itself onto the wall, head arching back, neck twisting like a snake so those gold eyes could focus upon him.

Black talons knocked the boy off his feet. Having jumped across the arena, the dragon crated a cage with its claws and watched as the human between them tried to squeeze through.

A mouse trapped between the paws of a lion.

From the mouths of the villagers, a gasp aroseâ€”and was smothered by a sound like the wind howling between shutters, of the whistle of a storm in the night that was squeezing through every hole, every crack. A black streak rose up into the air and vanished into a plume of purple fire and dark smoke. Iron glowed red, twisted and smouldering from the blast as the arena filled with darkness.

"Somebody get in there and help him!" Cried one of the villagers as the sounds in the arenaâ€”beyond the billowing smokeâ€”became pained and frantic. Flapping wings were clearing the grey away and into the clear air stumbled the Monstrous Nightmare, rolling along the ground to dislodge the hissing black creature on its back.

Gobber spoke the species allowedâ€”now that it was seen, now that they recognized the sound and the shape. "_Night Fury_."

Toothless held onto the bucking dragon, snapping at the long neck even as it twisted backwards, dislodging him from the scales. Crooked fangs aimed for the delicate underbelly, kept away by four legs and thick claws that slashed across the Nightmare's snout and jaw. Hind legs pushed outwards, kicking the bigger creature back, giving the black dragon time to roll onto his feetâ€”white teeth bared, eyes narrowed and glinting like the armour the Vikings wore.

Behind the Night Fury, Hiccup watched, hands braced against the ground, knees scraped up from where he had been forced down. He watched with widened eyes, mouth open, lax in surprise at the dragons in front of him.

The two roared, wings spread, heads shaking back and forth like two dogs circling each other in a fight. The Nightmare lunged for the side and was greeted by a swipe to the face. Toothless opened his mouth and the sound that came out of him echoed through the arena. He lunged again and again, backing up the larger beast against the wall until it ducked its flattened head, pulled the dark orange and black wings close, and scurried, body pressed against stone.

Hiccup got to his feet, stumbling, one knee almost giving out on him before racing to his friend. One hand pressed against the small nostrils, trying to force the head to look away from him, for those big, green eyes to move back to the hole blasted through the iron. "Alright Toothless," he said, because thanks could come later. Thanks should come later but the dragon wasn't _moving_. "Go, get out of hereâ€”"

The Vikings came in a swarm and Hiccup spared a glance for them, swallowing roughly at the iron, the stone, the _weapons_.

"Go, _goâ€”_"

But Toothless wouldn't go, his muscles tensing up, eyes narrowing again, focusing on these new opponentsâ€”those who put his _friend_ into this _cage_ to fight for his life.

And Hiccup could see that, could see that just as easily as he could see the back of his own hand. Toothless wouldn't leave him because Hiccup wouldn't leave Toothless. The truth of the world spelled out between them.

Friends.

Green eyes met green eyes, one more bright and shining like leaves in the morning dew, the other the colour of gas and danger. Both were wide, questioning, _wondering_.

Hiccup made his choice.

Hiccup chose his side.

He threw one leg over Toothless' saddle and heard the roar of anger (surprise? Fury?) of his father. Fingers curled into leather straps, the tailfin clicked into placeâ€”and then they were going upâ€”shooting like a star, a catapult. Iron fell in melted bits around them and Hiccup thought his throat was burningâ€”but it wasn't the fire, wasn't the smoke, because something wet and salty was arching down his cheeks and dripping down onto black scales.

The rock of Berk vanished, making way for the stretch of the dark blue waters. Toothless soared, his wings beating like the thundering in Hiccup's chest.

Toothless flew. He flew and he flew over the never ending stretch of ocean. The tears had long since dried on Hiccup's cheeks and the boy's forehead rested against the smooth, dark scales of his friend.

"That was stupid," he said at last, breaking the sound of the water and the sky. "That was stupid, _stupid_, stupid!" Sitting up, he cried the last word to the sky, pressed both palms against his forehead, and _screamed._

Beneath him, Toothless made a sound that _could_ have been a whine. It was more echoing and haunting than anything, but it was remorseful and sadâ€”which was all that mattered. Hiccup patted the dragon's neck, leaning his head forward again until his bangs were low over his eyes, blocking out the horizon and setting sun.

"We need to find a place to sleep," Hiccup said, because he couldn't focus on what was behind, not _now_. He leaned back again, this time moving into a position so he could be an active participant in flying. The pedal clicked and Toothless angled upwards towards the cloudless sky. They rose, higher and higher, looking for a place to rest, to get food, shelter, and their bearings.

Rocks and trees. Hiccup sighed and patted Toothless on the head, getting the dragon's attention. Rocks and trees and large enough cliffs that no one would be on it. The island was smaller than Berk. Possibly even smaller than the village; a lake in the middle, trees around the side, and what looked like a cavern made from fallen

boulders.

Okay, so the cavern wasn't the sturdiest looking thing, but it was better than, well, the _ocean_.

Toothless landed with a hop, almost dismounting Hiccup in the process as he went for a drink, slurping at the clear water. Grunting, the boy slid off his back and almost collapsed, his knees and thighs aching from the long ride. He took a step and sat down on the grass, laying back to appreciate the clear sky as he waited for the throbbing to ease away.

A black nose pressed against his face, jaw sopping wet.

"Oh, _gross_," he whined, smiling and pushing away the dragon's face. "That is _disgusting_."

The dragon shook his entire body and landed on Hiccup's lower half with a _thump_—possibly knocking some sense back into the boy's legs because they jumped, the tingling subsiding while they suddenly felt like working again.

Too bad he couldn't move them because, well. You know.

Night Fury.

"How about some fish, huh bud? Wanna see if there's something to eat in that lake?" _That_ got Toothless to move. The dragon was full of life, bounding around the grass, jumping on trees, rocks, _Hiccup_. The boy laughed at the creature's antics and walked around to find some wood for a hook. "You can't eat _all_ of it," he told his friend, but the happy tongue-hanging-from-mouth excited look he got meant that the dragon was nowhere _near_ listening.

One wooden hook later (in which he had broken a stick bit by bit until it was both sharp and _small_ enough) Hiccup removed the riding harness, laid it out on a rock, and shed his shirt. Toothless whined and tilted his head to the side, eyeing the yellowing bruises up the boy's ribs from that morning. "I'm fine," the Viking murmured, rolling up his pants and stepping into the water. He pressed his fingers along the bottom before grabbing something and wrenching upwards.

Water grass.

"Don't look at me like that," he told the dragon. "I'm not sacrificing a good shirt so you can have a free meal."

Toothless huffed, but watched as the stem of the grass was tied around the hook. Hiccup scooped up his shirt and climbed on top of one of the boulders overhanging the lake, slipped a bit of a leaf onto the sharpened wood, laid on his stomach, and waited.

The dragon whined, Hiccup ignored him. Finally, after a few minutes of stillness, Toothless climbed up beside the human and stared down into the water. He saw their reflections—“one pale, freckled boy and a black dragon, both with wide green eyes.

The stem twitched and Hiccup held it where it was with an elbow and reached for his shirt. "Please don't be something that will bite my

hand off," he murmured and scooped his shirt through the water, closing it up and around a thrashing body.

Two thrashing bodies?

Three. Three thrashing bodies.

Hiccup stared at Toothless for a long moment, arms wrapped up in wet green fabric as tails wacked against his chest. The cool water dripped down his skin, creating goose bumps in their wake.

And then the Viking remembered how big the dragon's stomach was and he groaned.

* * *

><p>The ice settled in around Berk. Harsh, grating, pillars of ice that wouldn't move, wouldn't budge. Stoick stared out at them, tracing their angles with his eyes, their contours, the way that the light glinted off of them. He was alone in the early morning; the village sleepy from the first snowfall of the season.<p>

It had crunched between each step, but Stoick wasn't moving now, so all was silent.

He stared out this way ever since Hiccup had left, every morning, he suffered this penance, hoping that he would see a black shape on the horizon, that he would hear that horrible roar of a Night Fury.

But there was nothing except for clouds and the sky and the ocean.

The arena had not been fixed since his son's departure; the mangled iron and broken chains still scattered across rock. He knew that Astrid and her friends still met there. He knew that they were looking for a way to get Hiccup back. Who was he to stop them? A father who wanted his son back just as much, who wanted to apologize, who wanted to see his son smile again.

It was only until after Hiccup had left that Stoick realized that he hadn't seen the boy smile in such a long time.

And it may have only been a couple of weeks since he had last set eyes on his son, but it still felt like each day was a year.

"Stoick!" And that would be Gobber, gleefully waking up the sleeping village. The blonde man hobbled towards him, peg leg replaced by something more sharp so that it wouldn't slip on the ice. But he paused next to the chief, looking out over the sea and the ice. "Still gone, eh?"

For a moment there was only the sounds of clanking, of doors opening, of yawns and stumbles as the people of Berk awoke.

"He's not coming back, is he?"

"I wouldn't say that," Gobber's blue eyes widened, flickering between the chief and the ocean. "The boy is just frightened. Give him time; he'll come back."

Stoick heaved a great sigh that seemed to come from the marrow of his bones. "And if he doesn't, Gobber? What then?"

"Just give him time to think things through, once a rock hits him on that stubborn skull of his." But the blacksmith's optimism dimmed just a bit as he watched the chieftain's brow furrow, a sadness weighing down his broad, strong shoulders. Never had Gobber believed that Stoick took on the weight of the world than in that moment.

The sun rose higher, people started milling around, greeting both the chief and the blacksmith. Together, the two friends turned away from the sea, straightened their shoulders, and walked forward to face the day.

* * *

><p>There are times when the Gods dare not meddle in the affairs of those lesser than them. But, on the clear, winter night, it was not one of those times. Hooves galloped across the night sky, a great black horse made of stars and darkness travelled along the light of the moon. On his back was a woman with dark hair kept free of braids. Her feet were bare and her fingers dragged through the sky like it was water.<p>

HrÃ-mfaxi, for that was the horse's name, landed on the grass with the gentle step of a giant. His nostrils flared mist swirling up over the lake, crystallizing in the cool air as the woman slid from his back with the grace of a cat. Her footsteps were silent as she walked over dying grass to the form curled up on the ground.

The tips of her fingers hesitated just above the black snout and, for a second, the world was still, holding its breath.

Green eyes fluttered open, pupils wide before focusing on the pale hand and the woman that held it out.

"Hello," she said, and her voice was low like an owl's and soft like the leaves of a tree being ruffled by a breeze. Her fingers brushed his snout and were cold and warm at the same time. "Wake your rider, night brother," she cupped his chin before pulling away, swift as a shadow. "You have somewhere to be."

Toothless huffed and got to his feet, wings unfurling so Hiccup tumbled out onto the grass. The boy groaned, rubbing at his eyes. "Whaâ€?" A black tail curled around him, helping him up to his feet. "What's wrong, buddy?"

No answer was required, because Hiccup turned to follow the dragon's gaze and saw the woman, her black hair falling over her back, silver strands lit up by the moon. She turned to look back at them and her eyes were filled with starlight. "Come," she said and HrÃ-mfaxi walked up beside her so her fingers could bury in his mane as she pulled herself onto his back. "We have little time."

"Time?" Hiccup scrambled onto Toothless' back. "What do you mean?"

The black horse reared, hooves kicking at the air before turning, galloping towards the edge of the island.

"Wait! _Wait!_" The boy cried and Toothless roared, taking after the horse and the riderâ€"and they both watched as the beast jumped over the edge... and continued to run across the open air. Launching himself out after them, the dragon followed, wings snapping open in the early night breeze.

Hooves made no noise as they travelled, the woman looking back at the wide eyed boy and dragon. She smiled, laughed, and kicked her ride's sides with her heels until even Toothless was having trouble keeping up.

"Where are you leading us?" Hiccup cried over the howling wind, leaning low over his dragon's back so they could pick up speed to try and catch the whipping tail. "Who _are_ you?!"

HrÃ-mfaxi slowed until horse and dragon were neck to neck, their riders eye to eye as the ocean passed underneath them. The woman reached out and brushed her fingers across Hiccup's cheek, her gaze moving over his face before she smiled, brought her hands back to the horse's mane, and sped off again.

"Th-that doesn't answer my question!" Hiccup sputtered and heard Toothless rumble underneath himâ€"a laugh, perhaps, by the way the dragon was grinning. "Do you know who she is?"

Another rumbling laugh before the Night Fury sped up, the wind whistling past them and the moon above. Hiccup reached forward, straining, his fingers just about to brush the flowing, black tailâ€"the horse and woman vanished and both Toothless and the Viking almost wheeled forward. They searched the darkness of the sky for her, but there was nothing except the stars, the moon, and some clouds.

Yet the clouds smelled an awful lot like smoke and there was a dull, orange glow underneath them. "Toothless," Hiccup murmured and urged the dragon down to investigate.

Fire. Lot of fire that was devouring homes, devouring sheds, devouring barns where Hiccup could hear sheep and goats screaming. There were no dragons in sightâ€"but there were ships and screaming, the clash of swords and axes. "No," he murmured, because this... on the eve of winter, this wasn't right.

This wasn't _right_.

"_No!_"

The howling whistle of a Night Fury pierced the air as Toothless dove, purple spreading across his tongue. Armour that glinted gold shone underneath the moon, looking like molten rock next to the flames. The Vikings looked up at the sound of the dragon, fear gripping tight as the invaders continued to plunder, not paying attention to the death that came from above.

Toothless set the ships aflame, wood bursting under the power of his shotâ€"almost blown clear out of the water. Screams of a different kind tore through the night as the dragon soared and aimed at gold. Invaders were cut down, blown away by flame and wind as the Night Fury picked them off a few dozen at a time.

On the island, the Vikings roared and grouped together, raised their weapons and charged into the burnt and bleeding masses. Hiccup breathed out slowlyâ€"a sigh of reliefâ€"as he watched the men being pushed back. A scream drew his attention further north, closer to the village outskirts.

A child's scream. It was piercing and high pitched and Hiccup turned instinctually towards it. Toothless roared and shot over rooftops, his wings brushing wood and kicking up dust before they saw the man with the spear raise his weapon above his head, the tip glinting in the moonlight.

Bone and muscle crushed together as a six hundred pound dragon landed on top of it. Air whisked out of the man's mouth, his spear knocked to the side as Hiccup dismounted, running towards the young girlsâ€"twins, he realized, with their dark hair and wide, blue eyes. They stared at him, clinging to each other and, suddenly, the boy wished he hadn't left the Viking helmet behind. "Hey," he tried to smile, holding out his hands to show he meant them no harm. "Are you two alright? Did he hurt you?"

Their eyes went from him to the dragon sitting on the armoured man.

Hiccup flushed and winced just a bit, looking back at the overly proud Night Fury. "That's Toothless," he told the girls. "He won't hurt you."

As if to prove his point, the dragon batted at the man underneath him like a kitten playing with a ball of yarn. The man, of course (after he had gained his breath back), started screaming. Toothless huffed and leaned back, narrowing his eyes before turning around and sitting on the man's face.

"See?" Hiccup grinned as the girls giggled. He reached out his hands and let them grip his fingers. "Not going to hurtâ€" There was a huff and he turned, the two girls in his arms to see the entirety of the village standing in a half circle around him and Toothless. "You..." The boy swallowed, taking a step backwards while the dragon lowered his head, green eyes narrowed, watching the Vikings. "Oh."

"My daughters! Where are my daughters!" Someone was pushing through the back and the blaze from the village highlighted the man's dark hair and wide, bright eyes. His face was covered by a black, burly beard that was braided down the front and sides. Around his waist sat a belt, hoisted high and held together by gold and silver engraved with a horse.

A very familiar horse, if Hiccup was looking at it right.

The girls wiggled in his hold and the boy let them down, smiling as they cried "Papa!" and ran, arms up, towards their father. He scooped them both up in his hands and held them close to his chest, smiling under his giant beard down at them before his attention turned to Hiccup.

"You," he said, voice gruff and the skinny teenager's eyes widened, back straightening as he fought the urge to step back. "_You_ saved

my daughters?"

"I-Iâ€" Wide, green eyes moved from the chief to the surrounding villagers. "Yes?"

There was a moment of silence, where the only sound was that of the crackling flames and screams of invaders being slain. But the Chief smiled and hoisted his daughters further up on his chest. "Then thank you, stranger, for helping my people and for saving my children."

Hiccup stared up at him for a long moment. And he smiled, brightly and boyishly, his face lighting up not just from the fire or the moon. "You're welcome," the boy returned graciously (and let it never be said that the son of Stoick had been raised without manners).

"I am Freyr, son of Gunnar, Chief of N  tthaven," the large man set down his daughters and they hid behind his legs, peeking out to look at Toothless who went back to battling around the man beneath him. "And you and your... _dragon_ are welcome, stranger."

Toothless looked up at that and smiled his gummy smile at his rider.

"I'm Hiccup," the boy said, shaking his head at the dragon, a small smile on his face. "And that'sâ€"just _let_ him _go_ already, would you, Toothless?"

Black paws grabbed onto the gold helmet, the man beneath it screaming and trying to push the dragon away. Toothless looked up from his shiny, new toy and huffed but got off the man. He slunk to Hiccup, helmet in his mouth and sniffing at the worn, green shirt that the boy was wearing.

"Well, then, Hiccup," the chief motioned with one hand and two burly men moved forward, grabbing the invader and pulling him away. "You are welcome to stay the rest of the night; wash up, get a good meal into youâ€" "

"O-oh, no, Iâ€" But there was a broad hand pressing against Hiccup's back and Toothless was no help, bouncing along at his side. There was something said about a seamstress and getting his boots (they had been wearing a bit thin) fixed. Some fish (apparently this was a fishing village, which Hiccup could appreciate) was shoved in front of him and a mug of heated mead. He offered to help put out the fires, but someone shoved him back in his seat and pointed at the food.

Apron said cook. Hiccup learned long ago never to argue with a cook.

So he ate and Toothless was brought a basket of Cod that was full enough to feed two Night Furies. The black dragon ate it all anyway, rolling onto his back and stretching out his wings in contentment.

The bustling of a village in the middle of the night was familiar enough, so Hiccup moved towards his friend when he was full, laid against the warm scales, and dozed off to the sound of Vikings.

He woke up to the sound of giggling.

To be fair, it was the sound of giggling and murmurs, but there was definitely a sound like giggling. Hiccup opened one eye and was greeted by darkness. His ear was pressed against Toothless' chest and the dragon's heartbeat thundered through his ear as the strange, echoing noise of lungs filling and emptying had him raising his cheek off the smooth scales.

There were children gathered around, some of them watching with wide eyes, others being herded away by their mothers or fathers. Not in fear, but simply because the children were staring, mouths open and pointing with their little, stubby fingers at the large dragon and the boy curled up on the floor.

Hiccup stumbled to his feet, cheeks flushed from embarrassment as Toothless stretched out behind him like an overgrown cat.

"There he is!" Freyr's voice boomed through the hall and the boy almost jumped even as the burly man shouldered his way through the onlookers—the tall onlookers, that is. He simply stepped over the children. "Come, come!" Hiccup was nudged forward by Toothless, and followed, stepping around small and the large, scurrying after the burly man. The eyes watching him burned against his back as he scrambled through the open doors and found himself face to face with daylight.

The boy admired the village then—or what was left of it. Horses decorated the rooftops and square; their gaping, wide mouths screaming challenges up at the sun. Hiccup smiled at the stables, the horse masters and their gentle hands—there was no need for such beasts on Berk, even though the larger villages had tried to trade the mounts with Stoick.

It took Hiccup a bit longer than usual—he was too busy admiring the craftsman work around him—to ask where, exactly, the chief was taking him. But Freyr only chuckled and urged him on to a small building that had been untouched by the fire. There was a stall beside it—not unlike the forge with its open walls and shutter doors.

There was a woman and a young man sorting through batches of leather inside and they looked up at the sound of the chief.

"Come in!" The woman said, urging them on with flicks of her hands. "Come in! I have your order ready, here, Chief Freyr." She just about bounced to the large woven baskets, tucked away in the corner. The entire thing was placed up on a table and Hiccup stood on his tiptoes to look inside.

Clothes.

Winter clothes, summer clothes, what looked like gloves and headgear he normally saw the fishermen wearing out on their ships. "Uh," Hiccup started and quickly found his arms full of clothing.

"Go on!" The woman was motioning him to a curtained area. "Try 'em on!"

So he did. There were jackets with furred hoods that kept his ears

warm, gloves that left the tips of his fingers free for an easy grip. Green shirts that were new and not as ragged as the one he was currently wearing.

There was a lot of black and a lot of green. A lot of brown and a lot of red. Yet Hiccup kept trying on everything the woman handed him, stepping out when it fit (and even when it didn't). Some of the bigger clothes she left alone, "For you to grow into them," she stated.

So Hiccup left with his arms full of a basket that almost sent him wheeling backwards until Toothless took it from him. He had offered money, but she had refused telling him that it was her duty to repay the young man who had saved her shop.

She had even added a pair of boots in "warm ones that were perfect for the winter" and Hiccup had been speechless at her generosity.

A fisherman gave him a net, recognizing the wear of his shirt for what it was, the woodcarver made him a tiny Toothless that was sewn onto the saddle, right up front. But it was the blacksmith who offered him a day at the forge after recognizing the wear and roughness of his hands.

She led him to the furnace, left him with old, dented armour, and then left him to his work. Toothless kept the fire blazing, sitting by the wall and watching with wide eyes as the hammer banged and sparks flew. Hiccup continued his work, at ease with fire and iron, the strength of metal in his hands. He worked the whole of the morning, making a helmet that flipped up and down, guarding his face from the cold and lined with fur.

Each motion gathered a crowd; villagers surrounding the forge to watch the stranger build and create before their eyes. Metal was moulded under careful fingers, rounded and straightened, designs of dragons worked in with a steady hand. Hiccup worked until his palms and muscles were sore, sweat dripping down his forehead from the heat.

In front of him laid a chest plate with two shoulder guards, dragons climbing up the sides, their fires burning across the back. Finding green paint along the walls, Hiccup carefully lined the curled dragon upon one of the shoulders, making the wings look sharp, the tail spiked.

The heat of the forge dried it quickly and, before the village, Hiccup tried it on. The shoulders were a tiny bit too broad, but it fit well enough that the size difference wasn't noticeable.

"What do you think, bud?" The boy held his arms out while Toothless' nose ran over his sides and hair. The dragon's pink tongue flicked out and Hiccup found himself on the ground, yelping and trying to fend off the approving licks. "Ohhh, gross!" But he was laughing even as he was coated in saliva. "Toothless!"

The village laughed with him, the Chief's guffaws booming. As the night came, Hiccup packed up his new things, wearing the winter clothing that the seamstress had made him, leaving the old fabric behind. He mounted the dragon when the sky was gold, feet on the pedals, hood and newly forged helmet covering his head.

"Thank you," Freyr said again, grasping his forearm. Hiccup smiled beneath the metal and nodded, eyes wide and wet from their generosity.

"Wait!" Little voices shouted and the boy turned, looking back into the crowd as the two twin sisters ran out from under the legs of the villagers. One held a scabbard in her hands and held it up towards him.

Toothless, rumbling in the back of his throat, kneeled down so his rider could reach. The leather was decorated by the same horse that was on the chief's beltâ€"gaping, screaming mouth, eyes burning with fierce fire that could rival even a dragon. Hiccup held it gingerly and took the hilt of the knife in his hand, pulling the blade free. It was perfectly balanced, rearing horses creating the hand guard, a trinity knot at the base of the blade. "Thank you," He smiled at them, hooking it to his belt where it was fully visible.

"You are always welcome here, Hiccup Night Watcher," Freyr pulled his daughters back, heavy hands resting on their shoulders.

Goodbyes would have lasted for ages, so the boy just nodded his head as Toothless flared his wings. The wind howled as they took off, up into the air, chasing the last rays of sunlight over the ocean.

* * *

><p>I kept trying to update Utgard but I didn't like how it was going so I just started over cause I'm lame and dumb and it's been a super long time so sorry.<p>

So, so sorry.

The movie dragged me back kicking and screaming.

All mistakes are mine. Everything is mine. Even crappy characterization cause, wow, have I not written these guys in a long time.

(So, so sorry).

Happy Reading!

Grim

End
file.